

8 March 1982, 1500 hrs.

Cuban Involvement with Central American Revolutionaries

I continue to get questions regarding Cuba's involvement with revolutionary movements in Central America. What I will cover with you now should go a good deal of the way to answer one aspect of this question.

The most consistent element in the pattern of modern-day Central American revolutionary movements may be the role of Cuba. Each country in Central America is unique in various respects, the radical left movements are fragmented in different ways, and local circumstances are varied. Havana, however, has shown great flexibility in dealing with those elements. It has adapted to the differing situations, established ties with diverse elements of the left, promoted unification, and, when persuaded that the time was appropriate, provided increased material assistance to cement unification. The pattern began with Nicaragua.

-- Leaders of the three major factions of Nicaragua's Sandinista National Liberation Front met in Havana in March 1979 when the war against Somoza was underway and, with Castro mediating, formed a unified nine-man national directorate.

-- This group guided the Sandinistas to victory over Somoza in July 1979, and it rules Nicaragua today.

As the Salvadoran situation began to heat up and the Cubans saw profit in their involvement, they began to act.

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- Salvadoran guerrilla leaders meeting in Havana in May 1980 agreed on the name and organization of the Farabundo Marti National Liberation Front and the Unified Revolutionary Directorate, the 15-member executive directorate of the guerrilla movement.
- Cuban and Soviet officials participated in the discussions.
- The FMLN did not take shape as a unified insurgent army until November 1980, when the fifth and final guerrilla group joined and the FMLN General Command and General Headquarters (in Nicaragua) were established. This is the group that receives direction from a headquarters in Nicaragua.

As the guerrilla war in Guatemala has increased in intensity, so has Cuban involvement.

- Guatemalan guerrilla representatives meeting in Havana in January 1982 formed a loosely unified organization, the Guatemalan National Revolutionary Unity.

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Next in line is Honduras, and we have new information on the left in this country.

-- In mid-February 1982 representatives of five of Honduras' seven leftist organizations met in Cuba and agreed to unify.

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-- It is not yet clear how firm unification will become; we do not know, for example, if a formal unified executive structure will be established.

-- The Cubans did not actively participate in the discussions, but likely will promise increased support to encourage cooperation among the groups.

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